



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **ICE ARRESTS 25 CHILD SEX OFFENDERS IN CHICAGO AREA**

CHICAGO—U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents, working with area county law enforcement authorities, last week arrested 25 foreign-born, convicted sex offenders who had preyed on children and minors.

Those arrested include citizens of six countries: Mexico (18), Bosnia (3), Philippines (1), Peru (1), Ireland (1), and Canada (1). They include 15 permanent residents of the U.S. (“green card” holders), nine individuals who entered the U.S. illegally, and one person who entered the U.S. on a visitor’s visa but violated its terms by overstaying. All now face removal from the United States, though most have the right to a hearing before a federal immigration judge, who will make the final determination as to whether they must leave the country.

The arrests were the result of a cooperative effort among ICE and the sheriff’s departments of Cook, Will, DuPage, McHenry, Kane, and Kendall counties in Illinois.

“ICE is committed to protecting the most vulnerable among us, our children,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Elissa A. Brown of the ICE office in Chicago. “We will continue to work closely with our law enforcement partners to take these criminals off the streets, and when possible, take them out of the country.”

The arrests are part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to protect children from sexual predators, including those who travel overseas for sex with minors, Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, and child sex traffickers. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,000 individuals, including more than 300 in Illinois, making it one of the top ten states in the country for apprehensions.

Among the crimes committed by those arrested are:

- A “green card” holder who returned to his country of citizenship and was convicted of sexual abuse of a minor, then returned to the United States. The conviction, even though it was committed abroad, could result in the man losing his legal status here.
- A man who committed a sexual act in the presence of a 14-year-old minor with the intent or knowledge that the person would view it.
- A man who was convicted of aggravated sexual abuse for touching a 9-year-old girl for the purpose of sexual gratification.

Operation predator targets four different types of violators:

**Foreign National Child Predators:** More than 85 percent of the arrests in Operation Predator involve foreign national sex offenders whose crimes make them removable from the United States. To date, more than 2,100 of these foreign-born predators have been removed from the United States to their home nations. As part of this process, ICE advises the host nation governments about the criminal histories of each sex predator it is deporting to their nations. ICE also issues Green Notices through Interpol in appropriate cases. The Green Notice provides information on career criminals who have committed, or are likely to commit, offenses in several countries.

**International Child Sex Tourists:** Working cooperatively with foreign governments through ICE’s attaché offices worldwide, ICE agents have made 14 arrests under the child sex tourism provisions of the PROTECT Act.

**Human Smuggling & Trafficking of Children:** The criminal networks engaged in human smuggling and trafficking have become more violent and more profit-driven than ever before. At the same time, some of their victims are getting younger and younger.

**Internet Child Pornography:** Drawing on ICE’s cyber crime investigative expertise, ICE is tackling the crimes that cross the nation’s virtual borders. One massive investigation resulted in more than 1,200 arrests worldwide, and marks the first time the government has gone after the financial side of child pornography. Moreover, through the National Child Victim Identification System, more than 2,100 pornographic images containing child pornography have been authenticated.

ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. Investigators staff this hotline around the clock.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*